14: Asboe M-3 (no date) 1947 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

of course to be manured, though in practice the peasant cultivates the virgin soil for two or three years before enriching it with manure.

Owing to the scarcity of wood, the dung of cattle is dried in the sun and used for fuel, so that manure for fields is at a high premium. Recourse has therefore to be made to human manure liberally mixed with earth. In many villages public latrines are constructed for the reception of this form of manure. Again, owing to the shortage of fodder, the Tibetans never lay down straw as bedding for their animals. To increase the quantity of manure they simply add layers of earth to the droppings of the cattle in the stables, and in spring they take it away in baskets or in sacks to their fields before ploughing. To supplement the poor supply of grass and straw for their sheep and goats, the farmers use the bark of willow trees by cutting the branches and letting these animals strip them. The willow is the most popular and beneficial tree in the country, for it provides both fuel for the home and fodder for the goats and the sheep. Reforestation of the willow, as also the poplar tree, requires little effort, for all that is necessary is to stick the saplings in the ground, preferably near a watercourse, and they immediately take root.

According to the dryness of the ground it is watered previously or subsequently to ploughing. The manure is carried in sacks loaded upon donkeys or in baskets carried by the women. It is then scattered over the field and ploughed into the furrows in which the seed is sown. Sometimes the seed is broadcast on the land and then ploughed in. The plant is allowed to grow to the height of five or six inches, when a light supply of water is applied at intervals of a few days until the crop is vigorous enough to tolerate a weightier supply of water conducted along the ingeniously constructed watercourses.

Many of these watercourses are two or three miles long, depending upon the distance to the source of the water supply. Their gradients, which are usually about three feet wide by one and a half feet deep, are cleverly contrived so as to prevent a great quantity of water from flowing at one spot and causing the earth banks to break. Where an almost perpendicular cliff or solid rock is encountered, the water is conducted along wood gutters hollowed out of pine trees, forming a gallery round the cliff or rocky abutments. To conserve the supply of water large or small dams are constructed, which are guarded by a party of men chosen by the village to control the supply to the fields immediately beneath it. The water supply is of such immense importance and so hard to come by that meticulous care is taken in rationing it out to the various farm holdings in the neighbourhood. Failing an adequate supply of water for irrigation purposes it is futile to attempt to plough land, for no reliance can be placed on natural rainfall, especially in Western Tibet. The village watercourses are kept in repair by the farmers whose fields receive water from them.

Ploughing is performed by a pair of oxen (dzos—a hybrid of the yak and the cow) driven by a ploughman without reins. They are guided with the utmost precision by the voice or by a willow wand. The plough is made entirely of willow wood except for the point, which is formed by a small piece of iron. The whole structure is simple, inexpensive, and

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

595 body denied, nevertheless, that jealousy was there, ever-present, under
578 the surface. All they said was that it is kept in check by the necessity
152 of the polyandrous system, which in turn is the result of the dearth of resources which consequently should themselves be shared in so bleak an environment.

844 The education of the children in a polyandrous household was the next point which I took up. At birth, I heard, there was no midwifery, mothers usually going to the assistance of their daughters and rendering them the necessary service. After that, it was the mother who naturally
854 looked after the baby in its early infancy, often suckling it for a pro-
[853] tracted period of from one to three years, depending on subsequent pregnancies. Sometimes, a woman would be assisted in the care of the child by one of her own sisters from outside – either from the house of her parents or from the house she had been married into in *bag-ma*.

863 Asked what were the rules of cleanliness taught early to a baby, I was told that there were none. Children were left to do absolutely whatever they liked in this respect, and put outside the house to play in the lanes and fields with other children, without any constraint being imposed upon them. Of course, if they dirtied the house, they were scolded and driven outside, but beyond that attitude, the mother never
514 attempted to control them in such matters at all. (This might actually
123 account for the extraordinary freedom of Tibetans everywhere within their cultural area in what concerns evacuatory functions; both men and women seem to have no shame at all in performing on the streets in public and before everybody's gaze. They will also follow Europeans who try to retire in privacy, to see "how they do it" – one of the most embarrassing things about field-work in Tibet.)

859 Children take to playing very early in the lanes and fields. They make castles of mud and water, and nothing seems to amuse them more during their first years. They then go over to more sophisticated games such as hockey, riding on sticks, playing at being a family, at cultivating the fields with small, imitation hoes, at being bride and bridegroom at a wedding festival. Dolls are made for the girls out of rags, and the boys go about with little axes made of wood. But they seem to tire of such games at times, and often go back to making mud and water pies and constructions.

595 It is at this stage that paternal authority makes itself felt. I asked
855 who was the father who took over control, expecting it to be the eldest, as he is regarded as the head of the family. But I was told that this was not so, and that it was the father who was the most influential who